



News Release

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2002 trapping may be final step toward Kansas' boll weevil-free designation

TOPEKA – Kansas is likely to receive its boll weevil-free designation from the United States Department of Agriculture this year, which will allow Kansas cotton producers to more freely move their product to states and nations with boll weevil restrictions.

“This could be a real boon for our cotton producers,” said Jamie Clover Adams, Kansas’ secretary of agriculture. “It has the potential to solidify Kansas’ foothold in national and international cotton markets.”

Kansas cotton production has increased in recent years, from a few hundred acres in the 1980s to a projected 60,000 acres in 2002.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture’s plant protection and weed control program began setting traps for the boll weevil in 1998. Only one weevil was found that year out of the 66 traps placed in south central Kansas fields near the Oklahoma border. That weevil was believed to have blown in on wind currents from Oklahoma after the start of that state’s cotton harvest.

Trapping was expanded in 1999, when approximately 166 traps were placed in strategic locations along the Oklahoma border and in the area where the weevil was trapped in 1998. No weevils were trapped in 1999.

In 2000, USDA’s animal and plant health inspection service joined forces with the Kansas Department of Agriculture and helped operate roughly 300 traps in a two-tiered line about 60-miles long in south central Kansas. Another 50 traps were placed in or near cotton fields and gins. Six boll weevils were detected in the fall of 2001, again after the Oklahoma cotton harvest began.

The KDA-USDA trapping effort continued in 2001, when traps were placed at a rate of one for every 40 acres of cotton in the state. The traps operated from early May to mid-October and were serviced every two weeks. No weevils were trapped in 2001.

Between May and September this year, KDA and USDA will operate a trapping program similar to the one in 2001, and traps will be set in all Kansas cotton fields. If 2002 trapping results are negative, it will greatly enhance Kansas’ chances of being recognized as boll weevil-free. The distinction will provide a level of assurance to cotton growers that the boll weevil will not limit production, and it will assure other states that Kansas does not pose a risk of boll weevil migration to other areas.

If a producer has not yet been contacted about having a trap placed in a field, he or she should call KDA’s plant protection and weed control program at (785) 862-2180, or USDA’s Topeka office at (785) 235-0212.

Boll weevils arrived in the United States from Mexico in 1892 and have caused an estimated \$14 billion in yield losses and control costs to the U.S. cotton industry.